

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 MCT-01 NSCE-00
SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 /049 W
-----126813 211259Z /72

O 211151Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8039
INFO AMCONSUL IBADAN IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL KADUNA IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, NI
SUBJECT: STUDENT STRIKE: SITUATION EASES IN LAGOS

REF: (A) KADUNA 506, (B) LAGOS 4920

1. SUMMARY: MOST STUDENTS HAVE DEPARTED UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS (UNILAG) CAMPUS AND SITUATION IN LAGOS APPEARS TO HAVE EASED. AS REPORTED KADUNA'S REF A, SITUATION IN NORTH APPEARS TO HAVE WORSENER. GENERAL FEELING IN LAGOS APPEARS TO BE THAT POLICE OVERREACTED, BUT IT REMAINS UNCLEAR HOW MUCH SUPPORT STUDENTS HAVE FOR THEIR COMPLAINTS. NATIONAL UNIVERSITIES COMMISSION (NUC) HAS REFUSED TO ELIMINATE FEE INCREASE WHICH SPARKED CRISIS. END SUMMARY.

2. UNILAG SENATE (GOVERNING BODY) APRIL 20
ASKED ALL STUDENTS EXCEPT FOREIGNERS TO LEAVE
CAMPUS AND ST MAY 1 FOR RETURN TO CLASSES. EMBASSY
EMPLOYEE WHO VISITED CAMPUS LAST NIGHT REPORTED
THAT MOST STUDENTS HAD LEFT, BUT POLICE PRESENCE
REMAINED HEAVY. WITH DISPERSAL OF STUDENT
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PRESENCE, SITUATION IN LAGOS APPEARS TO HAVE EASED.
AT SAME TIME REPORTS FROM KADUNA (REF A) INDICATE
THAT SITUATION AT AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY
(ABU) IN ZARIA WAS SERIOUS ON APRIL 20. LAGOS
PRESS REPORTS THAT INCIDENTS TOOK PLACE IN CONTEXT
OF EFFORT TO DISPERSE STUDENTS FROM CAMPUS. IF
STUDENTS DID LEAVE ABU CAMPUS AND RETURN HOME WE

ASSUME SITUATION THERE MAY ALSO EASE SOMEWHAT.

3. REPORTS FROM VARIOUS SOURCES INDICATE THAT STUDENT BOYCOTT AND POLICE/STUDENT CONFRONTATION AFFECTED A NUMBER OF UNIVERSITIES AROUND NIGERIA--IBADAN, ILORIN, BENIN, NSUKKA, CALABAR. IT IS ALSO CLEAR THAT THERE WERE DIVISIONS WITHIN STUDENT RANKS. JUNIOR AND SENIOR STUDENTS AT UNIVERSITY OF CALABAR ISSUED STATEMENT APRIL 20 DISASSOCIATING THEMSELVES FROM NATIONAL UNION OF NIGERIAN STUDENTS (NUNS) EFFORTS TO BOYCOTT CLASSES AND APPEALED FOR POLICE PROTECTION TO ALLOW THEM TO RETURN TO CLASSES. IN A SIMILAR CONFRONTATION AT NSUKKA, VIOLENCE REPORTEDLY ERUPTED BETWEEN STUDENT FACTIONS AND FORMER PRESIDENT OF NUNS WAS HOSPITALIZED AS A RESULT OF INJURIES FROM STUDENTS FAVORING BOYCOTT.

4. THERE IS A WIDESPREAD IMPRESSION THAT POLICE HAVE OVER-REACTED TO SITUATION. IN BOTH PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS AND PUBLIC STATEMENTS THIS THEME HAS BEEN REPEATED A NUMBER OF TIMES. ONLY EDITORIAL COMMENTS WE HAVE SEEN TO DATE, IBADAN BASED TRIBUNE AND SKETCH, CARRIED THIS THEME. WHILE CRITICIZING POLICE, TRIBUNE ALSO SYMPATHIZED WITH STUDENT DEMANDS.

5. NUC HAS MAINTAINED ITS POSITION AND DR. JIBRIL AMINU, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF COMMISSION, MADE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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STATEMENT LAST NIGHT THAT "THERE ARE NO PLANS WHATSOEVER TO ALTER THE REVISION OF FEES...IT IS

THE LEGITIMATE RIGHT AND RESPONSIBILITY OF ANY UNIVERSITY TO CHARGE FEES. WE WOULD LIKE TO KNOW OF ANY UNIVERSITY WHERE STUDENTS WOULD DETERMINE WHETHER THEY WOULD PAY FEES OR NOT, AND HOW MUCH FEES THEY WOULD BE PREPARED TO PAY." AT SAME TIME HE ANNOUNCED THAT NUC HAD INVITED THE COMMITTEE OF VICE CHANCELLORS (UNIVERSITY PRESIDENTS) TO MEET TO SEEK A LONG TERM SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM. INDEFENDING 300 PERCENT INCREASE IN FEES. AMINU NOTED INTER ALIA THAT ABOUT 60 PERCENT OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AND ABOUT 80 PERCENT OF MEDICAL STUDENTS WERE ON SCHOLARSHIPS.

6. COMMENT: IF OTHER UNIVERSITIES ARE CLOSED AND STUDENTS SUCCESSFULLY DISPERSED, IT IS LIKELY THAT SITUATION WILL EASE SOMEWHAT. WE NOTE, HOWEVER, THAT NUNS PRESIDENT HAS CALLED FOR MEETING IN LAGOS TOMORROW TO DECIDE STRATEGY

FOR STUDENT ACTIVITY.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS, FEES, UNIVERSITIES, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978LAGOS05035
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780171-0027
Format: TEL
From: LAGOS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780432/aaaabajd.tel
Line Count: 118
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 361defa9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 KADUNA 506, 78 LAGOS 4920
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2894524
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: STUDENT STRIKE: SITUATION EASES IN LAGOS
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, PINS, NI
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/361defa9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014